

# COMMISSIONERS MEETING

April 5, 2023

*YORK,ss*

At a regular meeting of the County Commissioners of the County of York, begun and holden at the York County Government Building in Alfred, within and for the County of York, being held on Wednesday, April 5, 2023 A. D. at 5:00 P. M.

## COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard R. Dutremble  
Richard Clark  
Robert Andrews  
Justin Chenette  
Donna Ring

County Manager Gregory Zinser and Deputy County Manager Linda Corliss were present at the meeting.

## YOU ARE INVITED TO RISE AND SALUTE THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

### 04-05-2023      ITEM

- 1      PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)**  
None
  
- 2      TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:**
  - a. Commissioners' regular meeting of March 15, 2023  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
  - b. Commissioners' special meeting of March 29, 2023  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Andrews. Vote 5-0.
  
- 3      TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS**
  - a. Warrants to be approved on March 15, 2023 in the amount of \$499,896.05  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
  - b. Warrants to be approved on March 22, 2023 in the amount of \$467,126.56  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
  - c. Warrants to be approved on March 29, 2023 in the amount of \$630,225.43

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**4 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Chenette gave an update from his recent meeting as a member of the executive board of Southern Maine Regional Planning and Development Committee. He informed all of a few initiatives being worked on to include Safe Street Grants as well as a hub grant.

Commissioner Chenette added that SMRPDC is also submitting a request to the legislature for additional funding in the amount of \$200,000 for this commission.

Commissioner Dutremble informed all that he is a member of MCCA's legislative policy committee and 1,600 bills have been submitted so far. One is jail funding and he urged all to get in touch with their legislator to urge them to assist with getting additional funding.

**5 CONTINUATION OF PROPERTY TAX DENIAL ABATEMENT APPEAL**

a. Usher v. Town of Buxton

Commissioner Chenette motioned to take this matter off the table. Commissioner Ring seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

County Manager Zinser explained that Buxton Town Assessor Gingras explained that this property was not assessed additionally. It was not put into any special category. The County Manager added that the Town of Buxton did send us another comparable property and that Mr. Gingras sent in one sheet of paper and that additional documentation was received from Mrs. Usher's attorney. The Commissioners have all of this information.

Mrs. Usher asked to speak. She addressed the Board and stated that her attorney sent a letter as to why the property sent in by the Town of Buxton isn't comparable to her property. She explained that the square footage is different and that property has a pool and more land. Also, that property is being assessed at a lower square foot value than her house is. Mrs. Usher stated that the comparable home is being assessed at \$206.15 a square foot while her home is assessed by the town at \$247 square foot. This is not equal or fair, she stated. Mrs. Usher stated that she is just asking for fair and equal treatment and that she believes the appraisal done by Heather Cote was fair.

Commissioner Chenette asked was it correct that Heather Cote's assessment was at \$525,000? Mrs. Usher responded, yes.

Commissioner Ring asked Mrs. Usher if it was ever explained to her why the difference was charged in square footage (between her property and the comparable property sent in by the town of Buxton)?

Mrs. Usher responded, never.

Commissioner Chair Dutremble stated that this Board must determine if it is fair or unfair.

Commissioner Ring stated that from her perspective, she doesn't understand why they are charged different amounts per square foot.

County Manager Zinser explained that it depends on how you do the math. Inputs into the valuation will result in a higher number of which to divide into. The comparable property has more structures as opposed to Mrs. Usher's property. Therefore, it is divided into a larger number.

Mrs. Usher replied that the square footage on that property vs. her house is quite significant. They have more land, more square footage.

Commissioner Chenette commented that we have two numbers- Heather Cote's certified appraisal of \$525,000 and the town assessor at \$619,000. That is a \$94,000 difference and that is the rub for me. That does make me question the \$619,000 figure. He continued that doesn't mean Ms. Cote's is more accurate but needs to be weighed into consideration.

Commissioner Dutremble stated that the town assessment will always be different from the town's assessment.

Commissioner Ring stated that she is not convinced by the town how the square foot charge is different and that she is not comfortable with the difference.

Commissioner Clark commented that the statute says that we have to assume the town's assessment is correct unless the appellant proves to us that the town is wrong. He added that he fails to see how the properties are comparable in many ways but that assessing is not a science. He added that he is not completely convinced either way.

Commissioner Andrews stated that it is difficult as this is not a sub-division with cookie cutter houses and they are trying to look at this in a fair way for both parties. He motioned to deny the appeal.

Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Ring stated that she is not comfortable with the difference in the rates. She added that if it was her property, she would be asking the same questions. Commissioner Chenette stated that he agreed with Commissioner Ring. He added that also there is such a discrepancy between the tax assessors vs. the appraiser's.

VOTE- 2-3 (with Commissioners Clark, Chenette and Ring opposed.)

Commissioner Chenette motioned to do a partial abatement with a reduction of \$47,000 from the town of Buxton assessment to a new total of \$572,000.

Commissioner Ring seconded the motion. Vote 4-1 with Andrews opposed.

County Manager Zinser explained that a Findings of Fact will be voted on at a future meeting.

**6 NEW BUSINESS**

a. H.R. Director Linda Corliss to seek approval of the following new hires/transfers:

i. Kathryn Mone in the position of full-time Major of Operations in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of April 17, 2023- H. R. Director Linda Corliss informed all that Ms. Mone is a former police chief in N. Hampton NH. She added that she had a correction on the date of hire and that it should be April 10, 2023.

Commissioner Andrews motioned to approve the hiring of Kathryn Mone in the position of full-time Major of Operations in the Sheriff's Office with a start date of April 10, 2023. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION- Commissioner Ring asked if this individual lives in York County Maine? H.R. Director Corliss replied, no.

Commissioner Ring asked if she will be moving? H.R. Director Corliss replied, not that she is aware of. Director Corliss added that Ms. Mone lives in Durham NH.

Commissioner Ring stated that she read about an issue in N. Hampton and wondered if that issue was resolved. H.R. Director Corliss replied that it was.

Commissioner Ring asked what Ms. Mone's rate of pay will be? H.R. Director Corliss responded, \$80,000 and that it is a non-union, full time position

Vote 4-1(Commissioner Ring opposed).

a. Doreen Staples to transfer from the D.A.'s office to H.R. in the position of full-time Benefits Specialist with an effective date of transfer of May 1, 2023

Commissioner Ring motioned to approve the transfer of Doreen Staples from the D.A.'s office to H.R. department in the position of full-time Benefits Specialist with an effective date of transfer of May 1, 2023. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

b. Continue 'FY 2024 budget review

i. Register of Probate Carol Lovejoy to present budget-

County Manager Zinser informed the Board that Carol is looking for a new position.

Register of Probate Carol Lovejoy presented her budget and stated that she increased the revenue by \$100,000. She explained that this is due to increased court filing fees and passport applications. The Biddeford Post Office has stopped accepting passports so the Probate office is very busy with passports. In 2022 we had 176 applications and so far this year we have 92. We charge \$35 for the acceptance fee and \$15 for photos. The costs to the department are \$9.56 to mail so that's why she has asked for an increase in our postage line. Also, Judge Houde's Orders go in thick envelopes resulting in higher postage.

We have about the same number of filings of last year. Register of Probate Lovejoy continued that she would have requested the new position in prior budgets but had no space. Now, we will have space with the D.A. moving out. We would want a Grade 7 employee with a

paralegal degree or certificate as they will have to work with Title 18C (our code).

Register Lovejoy explained that this person's duties will require research and familiarity with Title 18C rule and that is why a paralegal certificate or degree is required. She added that the Probate department consists of long term employees so they get lots of pto every year and will be retiring in the next 10 years or less.

Commissioner Ring questioned the general wages increase of 8.29% and elected officials 8.61% increase. County Manager Zinser explained that the Judge and Register and deputy register- have a longevity and COLA increase of 4% in their budget line and the others as negotiated by contract.

He added that there might be possible reclassifications of a couple of employees as well.

Commissioner Ring asked if it was correct that the new position is not in reflected in the Probate's budget as presented.

County Manager Zinser stated that it was not. Commissioner Ring asked Register Lovejoy if there are people in her office that are qualified? Register of Probate Lovejoy replied that they are trying to promote another with a paralegal degree to a grade 7 so we would have three paralegals in our office.

Commissioner Dutremble asked Register of Probate Lovejoy if she was satisfied with her budget? She responded, yes.

- ii. District Attorney Kathryn Slattery to present budget-  
D.A. Slattery addressed the Board and thanked them for their support. She added that it means a lot to have a space. D.A. Slattery continued that it has been a lot of work for Greg, Linda, Rick and Jen Kern. Jennifer Kern has been working as a legal secretary in Biddeford. D.A. Slattery gave statistics on her department's work. She explained that any increases in the budget as presented is largely driven by the need to move to Biddeford. Commissioner Ring asked the D.A. to get those statistics to the Commissioners. Commissioner Dutremble asked D.A. Slattery if she was satisfied with her budget? She replied that she was.
- iii. Sheriff William King to present patrol and jail budget  
Jail Budget-Major/Jail Administrator Nathan Thayer reviewed the jail budget. He stated that the jail budget is the largest budget in county and that many increases are out of his control. Major Thayer explained that while his budget shows a decrease of almost \$40,000 for Workers compensation, many of the other insurances have increased. The cleaning supplies budget line shows a decrease as during COVID we kept a lot on hand so because of how we managed we felt we could decrease this line, explained Major Thayer. Pre-trial costs are contracted services. County Manager Zinser reminded the Commissioners that they previously approved this in August of 2022. Commissioner Ring asked if they increase their staffing? Major Thayer replied that they did.

Major Thayer explained that the food services budget is up by \$35,000. He explained that they managed to avoid an increase last year. Cost of food is going up.

Commissioner Ring- asked how many positions in the jail are open right now?

Jail Administrator/Major Thayer replied that they currently have 46 full time filled and that includes supervisors.

Commissioner Ring asked if they are still boarding many people out? Major Thayer replied that they are. He explained that they now house females for York and Cumberland County.

County Manager Zinser explained that the state level budget is \$18 million and that this number is fixed by statute for all counties.

Money is then distributed to each county as percentage of a whole. Typically, we run about 13% of that distribution, he stated.

The County Manager added that the number is probably going up again based on some of our projections.

He continued that we are limited by the tax cap. Boarding is almost a wash.

Commissioner Dutremble informed all that there is a Bill out there for additional funds.

Commissioner Ring asked Major Thayer if he has any idea of what he feels he will be expending this year in your budget?

Major Thayer replied that this budget is pretty accurate.

Commissioner Ring asked if he would be looking at how much of a surplus or deficit we run in our personnel accounts? Personnel fund their own insurances.

County Manager Zinser stated that the only savings is a staffing surplus but an overtime deficit.

There will be a surplus, stated the County Manager.

Major Thayer interjected that the State of Emergency pay results in double time.

Commissioner Clark asked about the change in worker's comp. insurance and asked if this was due to a change in experience?

It was due to less employees, explained the County Manager but will likely increase as we hire more Corrections Officers.

Commissioner Dutremble asked Major Thayer if he is satisfied with his budget? Major Thayer stated, yes, absolutely.

Sheriff King reviewed his requested budget with the Board. He explained that books and periodicals were under funded last year. Sheriff King continued that there is always lots of training needed. Therefore, he increased the employee training and development line by \$5,000.

Other budget line increases, stated Sheriff King include county vehicle maintenance, telephones as landlines, cell phones and air cards gone up for all. He added that his budget shows a vehicles increase of \$10,000 as costs have gone up.

Commissioner Ring referred to the vehicle inventory sheet that the Commissioners were provided with. She stated that there was no mileage information on this making it hard for her to determine if the vehicle is on its way out or not.

She questioned if it was accurate that there are six vehicles in production that are not on the road yet?

Major Mitchell replied, not yet.

Commissioner Ring replied, so they are sitting there and how many in this budget?

Major Mitchell responded, seven.

Commissioner Ring stated that the capital budget was reduced down to three and then it was increased to seven to get caught up. It looks to me you are caught up, she stated.

Major Mitchell explained that the new vehicles are slated to take over the 17's and 18's.

Commissioner Ring responded that you have your 20s, 21s and 22s.

You are looking at 6 right here and you are looking at 7 that's 13 vehicles, she commented.

Sheriff King stated that this (program) has worked out extremely well.

He stated that he would urge the Commissioners not to toy with this.

Major Mitchell explained that everything stopped during COVID. We couldn't get 2023 vehicles and we had to go back and buy 2022 vehicles.

He explained that the equipment has to be bought and that stopped production so it's a catch up.

Commissioner Ring stated that there are a lot of vehicles for 17 positions.

Commissioner Ring added that the contracts don't count as they provide their own vehicles.

County Manager Zinser explained that the (vehicle) rotation is set up 7, 7, 7, 6.

Commissioner Dutremble commented that he was on the Board when we decided this. This program is good because what happens also is the police deputies a lot of the time are just idling their vehicles so still wear and tear on the vehicles.

Sheriff King explained that if the vehicles are usable we are able to sell them

Commissioner Ring asked for the mileage on each vehicle.

Sheriff King stated that is a lot of work and as soon as we give it to you, it changes. He questioned the purpose.

Commissioner Ring explained so we can see which ones have low mileage and which ones don't. Do we really need to buy new vehicles?

Commissioner Chenette asked the Sheriff if he felt he had adequate resources to handle FOAA?

Sheriff King replied that he would love to see the County at some point take care of those.

Commissioner Dutremble informed all that there is a Bill coming addressing that problem.

Sheriff King stated often the system is abused where people can get a crash report and the charge is \$20 and some FOAA to get it for free.

Commissioner Clark stated that he supports the plan to cycle vehicles in and out and saving a nickel this year will cost you a dime next year.

Commissioner Clark asked Sheriff King that since internal combustion engines are on their way out, has he given any consideration to electric vehicle for police use?

Sheriff King replied that he has spoken to Sheriff Liberty regarding this and that he doesn't think the infrastructure is here.

They don't have vehicles that are pursuit rated yet.

Sheriff King replied that he is really willing to look at it. We would have to have a charging station.

Commissioner Clark said to Sheriff King he needs to be thinking along those lines and what he needs to be doing for the future.

Commissioner Dutremble asked Sheriff King if he was satisfied with his budget?

Sheriff King replied that he wanted another deputy but is now looking at other alternative, so, yes he is satisfied.

- iv. Facilities Manager Rick deRochemont to present facilities budget- Facilities Manager Rick deRochemont informed all that there are a lot of projects and upgrades under way at the Sheriff's Office and this building. Some budget increases are due to the new Biddeford D.A.s office.

County Manager Zinser added that they are asking for a new maintenance position thus bringing the number of employees to six plus one part time and looking for one more.

Commissioner Dutremble asked Facilities Manager Rick deRochemont if he was satisfied with his budget. He replied that he was.

**TAKEN OFF AGENDA**\*Pending- Megan Gean Gendron to present LWRC. They will be heard at the next meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

5 min break.

Back in session at 6:47 p.m.

County Manager Zinser stated that the last remaining budget item will be Layman Way. Commissioner Ring asked one more question about the Sheriff's budget regarding requesting court security 3 days a week.

County Manager Zinser informed all that this position was requested by Probate. He continued that when the marshalls leave, there will only be one (officer) there. With the addition of this new request, there will be one screening and one in the courtroom.

Commissioner Dutremble added that he has had a lot of conversation with some employees who are worried so he supports this request. Commissioner Ring stated that she agrees.

## 7 OLD BUSINESS

- a. Re-visit Director of Development Position –

County Manager Zinser explained to the Commissioners that at one of the prior meetings, they were asked to change the title to Director of Development and Marketing. After further discussions, it was decided that it should be Director of Development. The other item is segregation of funds. Right now, until we figure it out, stated County Manager Zinser, he recommends keeping this position in a separate fund. You need to keep it in a separate fund for recording purposes. His recommendation would be that it continue to be funded with the LATCF fund and backfill with opioid funding and not be part of the general fund.

County Manager Zinser explained that this is not what the Board directed so they would need to undo their prior vote and re-vote.

Commissioner Clark motioned to rescind the previous vote of the Commissioners.  
Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark moved to create the position of Development Director to work with the county raising outside funds and finance through LATCF funds.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**8 TO CONDUCT AN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON PERSONNEL ISSUES PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (A), ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (C), LABOR NEGOTIATIONS PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) AND CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (E), REVIEW OF CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (F)**

None

**9 PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)**

Susan Wiswell of Kittery ME, approached the Board and stated that she is a member of the budget committee. She wondered if in the future year have the budget caucus early in the process so new budget members come to our meetings so we don't need to reinvent the wheel.

Commissioner Dutremble explained that is the responsibility of your board and that the Commissioners cannot get involved.

The County Manager suggested that Susan talk to Joann Putnam, current President of the Budget Committee.

**10 ADJOURN**

Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.